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STATEMENT OF VICE ADMIRAL FORREST SHERMAN, USN
BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

(1 and 2 April 1947)

I believe it would be helpful if, before proceeding with a detailed discussion of the proposed National Security Act of 1947, I review briefly the background to its drafting. On 31 May, 1946 the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy submitted to the President a letter in which agreement was reached on various matters including a Council of Common Defense, a National Security Resources Board, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a Central Intelligence Agency. It was agreed that there should be no single military Chief of Staff. At that time full agreement was not reached on the coordination of procurement, production, and distribution; with respect to a research agency, or to an agency for the review of military education and training. At that time no agreement was reached on the number of military departments, or on the status of the Army Air Forces and Naval Aviation and the functions of the United States Marine Corps.

The President in his letter of June 15, 1946, to the Chairman of the Military Committees in Congress and the Secretaries of the Military departments reviewed the above points and outlined his position regarding those on which full agreement had not been reached.

On 7 November, 1946 Mr. Forrestal invited Mr. Symington, General Norstad, Admiral Radford and me to a meeting at his home at which it was agreed to draft a plan for unification acceptable to both the War and Navy Departments, and within the scope and spirit of the President's letter of 15 June, 1946. It was apparent that the issues which would have to be resolved in order for the Army and Navy to work better together were as follows:

1st. The Form of administrative organization of the departments in Washington;

2nd. The military command arrangements in Washington;

3rd. The military command arrangements in the field;

4th. The status and future of Naval Aviation;

5th. The status and future of the Marine Corps.

After considerable discussion, it was agreed that General Norstad and I would attempt to work up an agreement. The program discussed on that occasion contemplated the following:

1st. Three separate administrative departments;

2nd. A single Secretary of National Defense to coordinate the three military departments and to direct policy;

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The Executive Order proposed to be issued by the President on passage of the bill covers the functions of the services under a three department organization. I believe that the assignment of primary functions and responsibilities to the three armed services in that document will provide a proper basis for their development and for the necessary joint and coordinated strategic and operational planning which it was difficult and at times impossible to accomplish between the end of hostilities and the agreement of 16 January.

I have been asked repeatedly concerning the extent to which the proposed National Security Act and the proposed Executive Order provide safeguards for naval aviation and the Marine Corps. I do not consider that the proposed National Security Act attempts to safeguard any branch of any service. The only effective safeguard for any service or any branch of any service is the will of the Congress. As long as the Congress considers any branch of the service to be essential, it can be safeguarded and sustained by appropriations. I know of no other truly effective safeguard.

In concluding my prepared statement, I advocate passage of the bill, S.758, in its entirety for the following reasons:

- (a) It will provide a comprehensive over-all program for the future security of the United States;
- (b) It will provide for the integration of the foreign and military policies of the government;
- (c) It will coordinate under civilian control the departments, agencies, and functions of the government relating to national security;
- (d) It will provide permanent machinery for the formation of integrated programs for the most effective use of the nation's military, human, natural, and industrial resources in the interest of national security;
- (e) It will provide for coordination of the nation's foreign intelligence activities and for the central operations of foreign intelligence functions;
- (f) It will prevent undersirable duplication, harmful competition, and unnecessary overlapping of functions;
- (g) It will provide for adequate provision for and coordination of research and development on scientific matters relating to the national security;
- (h) And finally it will provide for an effective team of land, naval, and air forces for the defense of the nation.
